Briefly Speaking

B. Sp. No. 18 July 10, 1941

Ever-Normal Granary Becomes Food Program

Food Program

The existing policies of the Department of Agriculture are definitely in line with a great national nutrition program. * * * From the standpoint of production, it has been the national policy in the past few years to make agriculture more flexible. * * * I want to emphasize that the first step, the big step, the hard step is to achieve production adjustment on a national scale. Once this becomes a practical possibility through sufficiently widespread cooperation and adequate administrative machinery, the adjustments themselves can be made upward as well as downward according to the need. This is true of both acreage adjustments and storage. Grain stored in the Ever-Normal Granary gives us a constant supply of food and feed that can be turned at any time into the channels of consumption to meet any emergency.

Upward adjustments.—Adjustments are being made upward for some products right now, in the new agricultural policy designed to furnish food for Great Britain and to safeguard our own domestic needs. Egg production is to be increased sufficiently to supply British needs, and in addition furnish the United States with as many eggs as we ever used in the year of greatest egg consumption in the past. We hope to increase milk production enough to supply Britain's needs for milk products, and, in addition, maintain our own average consumption at the level of the past 4 years. The production of canned tomatoes is to be increased by 50 percent over that of last year, and the production of all types of dried beans by 35 percent. Pork production is to be as high as possible; the spring farrowings this year are smaller than last, but the hogs

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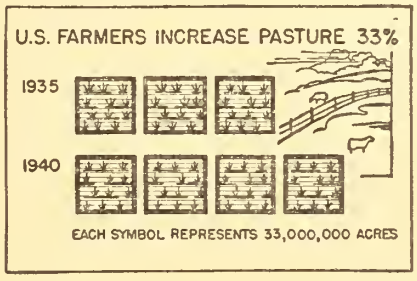


From 1935 to 1940, the plowable pasture land in the United States was increased 33 percent—from 98,579,000 acres to 130,924,000 acres, according to Census reports. These figures indicate that considerable progress has been made since the beginning of the AAA program in 1933 in checking erosion and guarding the soil's fertility by growing grass. The importance of this expanded pasture area is particularly significant when viewed from the standpoint of improved rotation, soil conservation, balanced production, and preparedness for defense. Vitamin-rich grass is an important item in the food-for-defense program, which has resulted in a demand for more meat, dairy, and poultry products.

The Job Ahead

The Department of Agriculture has asked for an immediate expansion in the production of pork, poultry, dairy products, and eggs. Now what's our job in AAA? First, get moving. See that every farmer knows about the program and then plans to increase his production of these products as much and as soon as possible. * * * To the community committeemen goes the responsibility for keeping their neighbors informed and in step with a world that is moving fast. We can't fall behind. It must be a story of farmers who produced abundantly and on time—of farmers who demonstrated that they could look out for their Nation's welfare and their own business at the same time.—*Harry N. Schooler, Director, North Central Division, in a talk to AAA committeemen, Sturgis, South Dakota, April 30, 1941.*

Nutrition and Conservation

Through the AAA program the farmer has set an example for all society by organizing surpluses into an ordered abundance that is a blessing instead of a curse. * * * We are learning that proper nutrition and education spell the difference between our underprivileged people and the rest of us. * * * Another thing we have learned is that there is a direct connection between nutrition and conservation. Impoverished soil cannot produce good food. Just as surely as poor soil makes poor people, poor soil makes poor diets. We can't go on squandering our soil, wasting its substance and its richness as in the past, if we expect to have a well-nourished, strong people in the future. * * *

Defense effort.—We can now be proud that farmers through the AAA program are making further necessary adjustments quickly and effectively to back up the defense effort. We are determined that this Nation shall not lack for any necessary farm product for the critical days ahead. We shall see that the President and the Secretary of Agriculture have enough and more than enough food and fiber supplies at their command to use as a weapon for defense, and later in the peace negotiations to use as an instrument for building a decent world. The farmers will not let the Nation down in this time of stress and I am confident that the Nation will not let the farmer down. As farmers and as representatives of AAA, we pledge our unlimited support to the all-out defense effort of this Nation, without any reservations whatever.—*R. M. Evans, Administrator, AAA, National AAA Conference, Washington, D. C., June 10, 1941.*

More Vitamins, Better Nutrition, Defense Objective

Saving Human Beings

When America began to recover from the blitzkrieg of the great depression, it began to take stock of its human resources. It faced for the first time what would seem to be the rather obvious fact that human beings were as much worth saving as forests and minerals, streams and soil. It recognized, too, that the ways of conserving men and women were as susceptible to scientific determination and engineering solution as were our dealings with inanimate national resources. * * * Now in the pinch of defense America needs her men and women, every one of them. * * * We know that a lot of people who are regarded as poor prospects for jobs need food. They are set down in personnel records as lazy or dumb. What is really wrong with them is they are hungry. * * *

R. A. F. gunner.—One gunner in the R. A. F. has, it is said, had an extraordinary record in nailing Nazi aircraft in the darkness. His mates, who called him "Carrots" because he was constantly munching that succulent root, did not know about vitamin A but they saw the results. But today there is a special diet for airmen and antiaircraft gunners.—*Paul V. McNutt, Federal Security Administrator, National Nutrition Conference for Defense, Washington, D. C., May 26, 1941.*

Nutrition Needs

How will farmers in the South, whose cash income is low, obtain nutritional foods for their families?

Because of the loss of export outlets (due to the war) for our cash crops, the AAA program in the Southern Region this year, more than ever before, stresses the need for increased production of food and feed for use on the farms where produced. * * *

In the nine States of the Southern Region, there are about 2,200,000 farms. The 1935 farm census showed that approximately 623,000 of these farms were without home gardens, 639,000 without milk cows, 800,000 without hogs, and 293,000 without even a hen.

Food and feed sources.—Gardens, cows, hogs, and chickens, plus orchards and feed for livestock, form the basis for a home-grown food and feed supply. Cash income for each person in the South is lower than in any other section of the country. The average Southern farmer, who does not produce enough food and feed for his own family and livestock, seldom has enough cash to buy what is needed. Unless the food and feed supply is home-grown, family and livestock go without. Poor diets result in ill health and contribute to disease and high death rates. Our first line of defense is a well-fed, healthy people on the home front.—*I. W. Duggan, Director, Southern Division, AAA, New Orleans, February 10, 1941.*

▲ Many a man will study nights to find out how his cows or hogs or chickens should be fed and will go to infinite pains to give them balanced rations, yet fail to have a glimmering of a notion that the diets of human beings must be balanced in just the same way.

▲ To every one case of frank deficiency disease, there are probably hundreds of cases of latent or incipient malnutrition.

Draftee Disabilities

Draft boards are finding out that nutrition is very important in recruiting soldiers. Up to January 31, 1941, more than 40 percent of the men called in the draft had to be rejected because of physical disabilities. The disabilities which rendered them unfit for military service were for the most part defects which result from malnutrition.—*AAA Film Strip, "Strength in the Land."*

Replaced Minerals

Have the lime and superphosphate applied by farmers under the agricultural conservation program contributed to the health of the people?

Soil that has been farmed and wasted for 100 to 300 years will grow very poor crops for food in the home and feed for livestock. It has lost many of the essential elements.

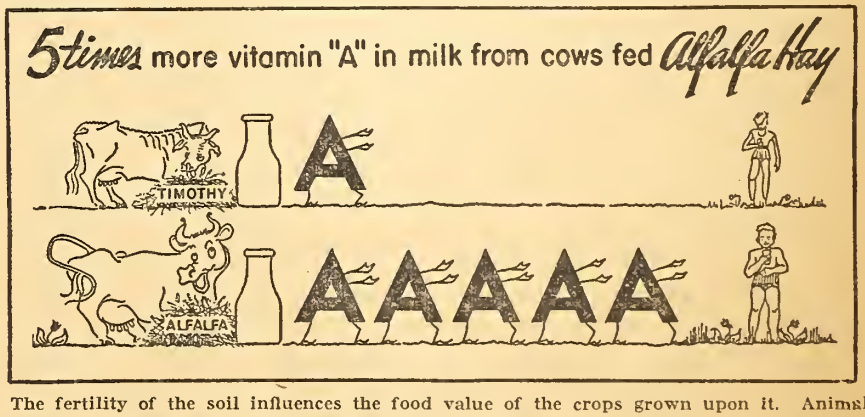
Lime and phosphate are minerals that many soils now lack so completely that they will not grow crops that people and livestock need.

Health benefits.—In terms of strong bodies, good health, and resistance to disease, it is impossible to estimate the value of the millions of tons of lime and superphosphate that East Central farmers have applied to their soil under the Agricultural Conservation Program during the last 5 years. Farmers know that a strong and healthy people are essential to national defense.

More lime and phosphate used.—Preliminary reports indicate that farmers participating in the 1940 Agricultural Conservation Program in the East Central Region made substantial gains last year in the use of ground limestone and superphosphate.—*W. G. Finn, Director, East Central Division, AAA, Facts for Committeemen, February 1941.*

▲ Vitamins are not interesting curiosities of the laboratory. They are matters of life and death to the individual, and they are tied in with the well-being of agriculture and the vigor and strength of the Nation.

▲ Automobile drivers whose eyes lack sufficient vitamin A may cause accidents at night.



The fertility of the soil influences the food value of the crops grown upon it. Animals feeding on depleted soils produce depleted milk. For example, cows fed on good grade of alfalfa hay produce milk with five times as much vitamin A in it as do cows fed on a poor grade of timothy hay. Thus, soil conservation has a direct relationship to nutritional status.—*Dr. Thomas Parran, Jr., Surgeon General, U. S. Public Health Service, The Technology Review, June 1940.*

Soil Conservation Still Vital Agricultural Goal

Thrifty Farming

Is it necessary for farmers to sacrifice conservation in order to maintain production?

We do not have to strain or abuse the soil to maintain the high level of production demanded by the defense program as applied to American agriculture. This was not true in the last war. Now we have the resources—resources of soil, and skill and knowledge—so that we can increase production when needed without sacrificing our conservation efforts. No one knows this better than Northeastern farmers. Their participation in the agricultural conservation program shows that they are dead set on conserving and improving their pastures and meadows and cropland. To them conservation is good, thrifty farming. And they know that conservation does not have to be sacrificed to production any more.—*A. W. Manchester, Director, Northeast Division, AAA, National Farm and Home Hour, March 17, 1941.*

Natural Resources

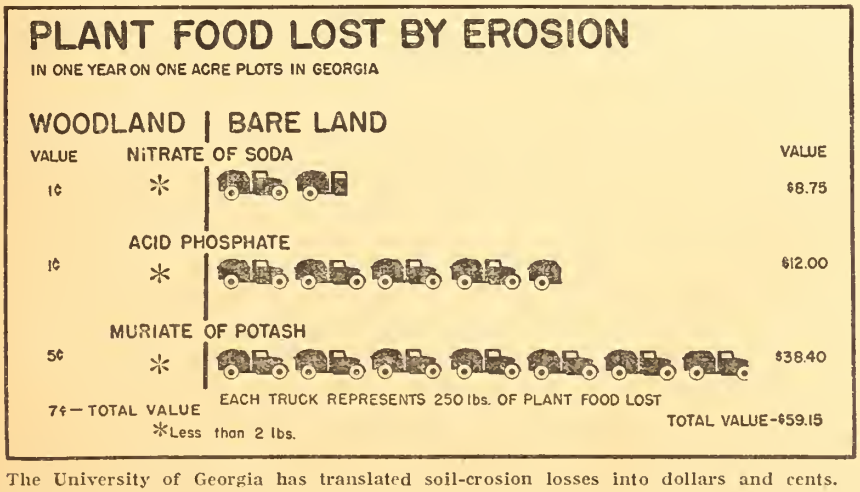
How do farmers cooperating with the AAA help conserve and build up their land?

At the same time that we are working for better farm prices and incomes through control and use of our surpluses, we are working to conserve and build up our soil for future use.

More Feed From Grass

Years ago, experiments and demonstrations conducted by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute showed that by restoring needed plant foods to the soil, farmers can make the heavy growth of bluegrass pastures continuous. * * * Over a period of years, an acre of rolling land will produce more feed from well-fertilized grass, which improves and holds the soil, than from corn, which exhausts the soil and allows erosion to waste it.—*Soil, the Nation's Basic Heritage,* T. V. A. and U. S. D. A.

Farmers who cooperate with the AAA, for example, help conserve and build up their land in two ways. First, use of land to produce surpluses that nobody wants is just plain waste of soil fertility. Instead, our farmers are using that land for soil-conserving crops. Second, farmers are carrying out soil-building and range-building practices as a means of returning fertility to the soil and of preventing the loss of national wealth through soil erosion. * * * The great natural resources of our Nation were entrusted to our care, not to be squandered in wasteful and needless surpluses.—*N. E. Dodd, Director, Western Division, AAA, Twin Falls, Idaho, March 13, 1941.*



The University of Georgia has translated soil-erosion losses into dollars and cents. A comparison was made between 115 pounds of soil washed from an acre of woodland in a year and 112, 316 pounds (56 tons) eroded from the same area of typically bare soil in the same time. Soil from each test area was analyzed to determine the amount of plant foods each contained. * * *

It was learned that if a farmer bought commercial fertilizer at 1935 prices to replace the plant foods washed from the woodland, the cost would be just 7 cents an acre. But he would have to spend $59.15 to replace the loss from bare soil.—Soil, the Nation's Heritage, T. V. A. and U. S. D. A.

AAA Doing Its Part

One of the great causes of low income on farms, and consequently one of the major causes of farm migrancy, is the exhaustion of the soil in America. The most dramatic evidence of the exhaustion of land is found in the floods and droughts and duststorms that we have had in recent years. The AAA is doing its part to check these ravages of nature. About 6 million of the Nation's 7 million farmers are cooperating with the AAA to carry out the agricultural conservation program on more than four-fifths of the Nation's cropland. We have made great headway by taking acreage out of soil-depleting crops and planting it to soil-building and soil-conserving crops. We are giving more and more help to farmers in carrying out conservation practices that build up the fertility of the soil. This effort is a long, uphill task that is far from finished. In fact, indications are that even now soil fertility is being depleted faster than we are able to restore it. If we are going to keep farmers on the land, and if we are going to put the land into proper condition so that farmers can make a living on it, the agricultural conservation program will have to go forward at an increased pace.

Fields for pioneering.—The greatest fields for pioneering today are in taking care of the aged, in giving youth a start in life, in finding productive work for the unemployed, in taking care of our land, in strengthening the buying power of low-income families, and in raising the standard of living of people generally.—*R. M. Evans, Administrator, AAA, before Congressional Committee, December 2, 1940.*

Education Problem

Teachers comment almost uniformly upon the noticeable improvement in physical vigor and mental alertness (of school children) following a mid-morning meal or a well-balanced school lunch. In our educational system we are wasting much money trying to teach children with half-starved bodies and minds.—*Thomas Parran, Jr., Surgeon General, U. S. Public Health Service, Technology Review, June 1940.*

▲ Almost without exception, farm people on severely eroded land are ill-fed, ill-clad, and ill-housed.

Ambition Goes

Endurance, determination, courage—these qualities are weakened when particular vitamins are lacking in food. The lack may cause a person to change from an ambitious, energetic individual to one who is slovenly and disinterested. The first thing that goes is the will to sacrifice, the will to get anything done.

Vitamin scarcity.—The American diet of today, even in families with liberal money expenditures for food, contains only about a third as many units of vitamin B_1 as the diet of Civil War times. And with the vitamin B_1 has gone a quota of many other vitamins and minerals.

The losses from this replacement of the undermilled flour of the past with white flour and sugar have been compensated for to some extent by greater consumption of garden vegetables and milk. Unfortunately, however, neither garden vegetables nor milk provides vitamin B_1 so generously as does wheat. * * *

Nub of Problem.—The milder degrees of nutritional deficiency are the nub of the nutrition problem. Our experiments show that a man can subsist on 0.6 milligram of vitamin B_1 a day, but that he is at best only half alive on this amount. To do the things we want done now, he needs at least 1.5 milligrams, and for safety, 2 milligrams. Not over half, probably fewer than a third, of the adult male population gets that much vitamin B_1.—*Dr. Russell Wilder, Chairman, Committee on Food and Nutrition, National Research Council.*

▲ As erosion advances, the whole job of farming becomes at once more difficult and less profitable, and eventually it becomes impossible.

In 1926 in a school near London, * * * separate groups of boys were fed in different ways, and close records were kept of weight, height, and physical fitness. One group, on a basic diet presumably adequate, gained an average of 3.85 pounds in weight and 1.84 inches in height. Another group, fed one pint of milk a day, in addition to the basic diet, gained an average of 6.98 pounds and 2.63 inches.—*Dr. Thomas Parran, Jr., Surgeon General, U. S. Public Health Service, The Technology Review, June 1940.*

Vitamin-Deficiency Diseases

Every year the list of diseases found to be caused by vitamin deficiency is lengthened. Pellagra, scurvy, and rickets have been recognized for some time as starvation diseases. Not so many people know that certain serious skin diseases, poor eyesight, and arthritis may be due to vitamin shortage, and that a serious liver condition, usually associated with alcoholism, may be due to diet.—*AAA Film Strip, "Strength in the Land."*

Eyesight Sold With Butter

The body makes its supply of vitamin A from a yellow substance in plant foods, called carotene. It can also get vitamin A ready-made from certain oils or fats in animal foods—butterfat, for instance. During the World War, Denmark exported its butter because of the war demand and substituted other fats in the diet. Blindness, caused by lack of vitamin A, began to show up among Danish children. Their eyesight had been sold abroad with the butter.—*Food and Life, Yearbook of Agriculture, 1939.*

Food Program (continued)

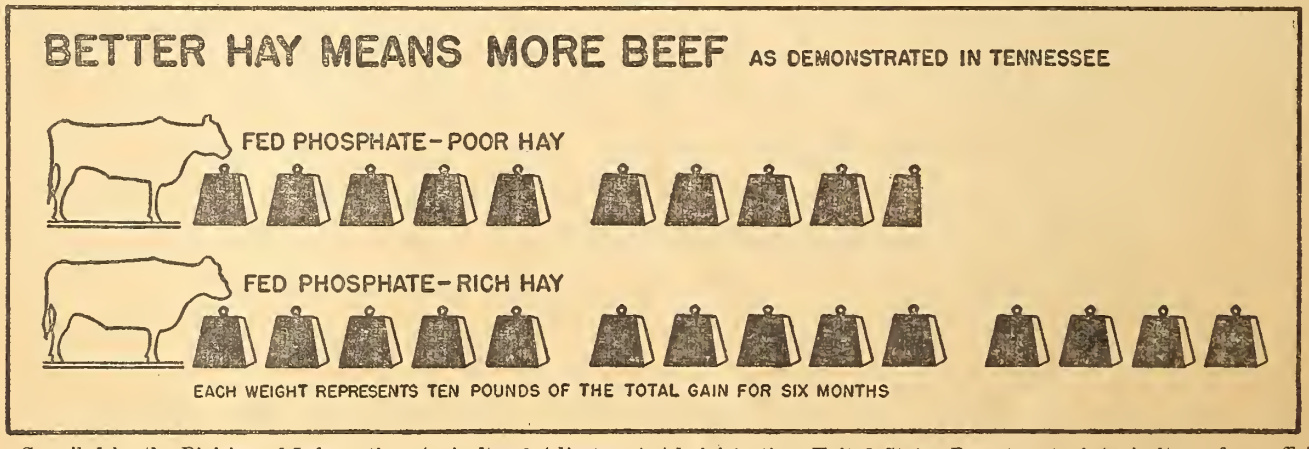
are being marketed at weights above the average, and the total supply should be larger than the average of recent years.

Dietary requirements.—Now these are some of the very products that we would need to produce in greater abundance, according to the nutritionists, if we set out to give everyone in the United States a satisfactory diet. In order to achieve such a goal, it has been figured that we would need to consume twice as much green vegetables and fruits as we do now (such things as cabbage, green beans, apples, and so on)—70 percent more tomatoes and citrus fruits—35 percent more eggs—15 percent more butter—20 percent more milk. All of these are "protective foods," rich in minerals or vitamins, or both. I have no doubt, too, that a great many people in this country would be benefited by eating more meat than they can now afford.—*Secretary Wickard at National Nutrition Conference for Defense, Washington, D. C., May 27, 1941.*

Vitamin-Rich Surpluses

The Nation has ways to use its surplus at home today that it didn't have in the decade of the 1920's. During this school year, for example, some 6 million youngsters will be getting their noonday lunches free, made in whole or in part from vitamin-rich, surplus foods. * * *

A civilization that is commodity-rich but consumption-poor cannot survive. The world of tomorrow is a world that must use its surpluses.—*Milo R. Perkins, Administrator, Surplus Marketing Administration, Harpers Magazine, December 1940.*



Compiled by the Division of Information, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, from official and unofficial sources for the information of committeemen and others cooperating in the administration of the A. A. A. programs.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1941